

**MASTER EXHIBIT SERIES**

**HAITI**

**RELATIVES, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, AND SUPPORTERS OF  
ARISTIDE**

**[ME/HTI/93.003G]**

**JULY 1993**

All the sources of information contained in this document are identified and are publicly available.  
Master Exhibit prepared by Cambridge and Somerville Legal Services, Harvard Immigration & Refugee Program, in  
cooperation with Church World Service, Documentation Exchange, Florida Rural Legal Services, Haitian Refugee  
Center, National Immigration Project, National Lawyers Guild.

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## DISCLAIMER

The July 27, 1990 Regulations, "Aliens and Nationality: Asylum and Withholding of Deportation Procedures, mandated the creation of a new corps of Asylum Officers to provide an initial, nonadversarial adjudication of asylum claims. Asylum Officers use asylum law, interviews with asylum applicants, and relevant information on country conditions to determine the merits of individual claims for asylum.

The Resource Information Center was created to assist Asylum Officers domestically, and Immigration Officers determining refugee status overseas, by collecting and disseminating credible and objective information on human rights conditions. As specified in the Regulations (8 CFR 208.12), such information may be obtained from the Department of Justice, the Department of State, and "other credible sources, such as international organizations, private voluntary organizations, or academic institutions."

Master Exhibits are one means by which credible information on a given group deemed "at risk" is presented to Asylum and Immigration Officers. Master Exhibits are submitted by private voluntary organizations, law firms, or other groups, which are credited on the title page of the Exhibit. The contents of each Master Exhibit distributed by the Resource Information Center, taken as a whole, meet certain basic standards on credibility, relevance and format, and can provide Asylum Officers with valuable background material for evaluating country conditions.

This Master Exhibit provides publicly available information, analyses, or comment. All sources are cited. Updates to this Master Exhibit may be made from time to time. This Master Exhibit, however, cannot be, and does not purport to be, either exhaustive with regard to the country surveyed, or conclusive as to the merits of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. It is for the Asylum Officer adjudicating a particular case to determine what evidentiary weight to give to the information in this Master Exhibit.

The inclusion of this Master Exhibit in the collection of Master Exhibits compiled by the Service does not constitute an endorsement of the information in this Master Exhibit. *The views expressed in this Master Exhibit, therefore, do not necessarily represent statements of policy of the United States Government, nor does this Master Exhibit reflect foreign policy concerns of the United States Government.*

Rev. 10/08/92

**GROUPS AT RISK: RELATIVES, FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, SUPPORTERS OF ARISTIDE AND PERSONS ASSOCIATED WITH HIM AND HIS GOVERNMENT**

- | <u>Item</u> | <u>Citation/Description</u>   |
|-------------|---|
| I.          | <p>American Immigration Lawyers Association, <u>The AILA Human Rights Delegation Report on Haiti</u>, March, 1993, pp. 1-8, 13, Executive Summary.</p> <p>Madame Joseph St. Firmin was arrested in Les Cayes on January 8, 1993. She was arrested because the army was looking for her daughter, Marie Josie, a former youth organizer and secretary of Lavalas, who was in hiding.</p>   |
| II.         | <p>John Cummings, Acting Director - INS Office of International Affairs, "Memorandum to INS Asylum and Refugee Divisions, Re: Considerations when Adjudicating Haitian Refugee/Asylee Applications" 9 March 1993.</p> <p>"The purpose of this paper is to provide additional guidance to INS officers to assist them in the adjudication of Haitian refugee and asylum applications...</p> <p>3. <u>Potential targets of violence and threats of violence...</u></p> <p>A. Individuals who support, supported, or who are imputed to support or have supported the exiled President, Jean Bertrand Aristide...Grassroots liberation theology organizations in the countryside remain a strong base of support for President Aristide. These groups and their leaders have been particular targets of the army...Individuals, particularly in the countryside, who are identified as being pro-Aristide. Credible reports indicate that violence, including arrest and detention, has been directed at persons for possessing or circulating pictures of President Aristide...</p> <p><u>Leaders and members of potential targets...</u></p> <p>Although those in leadership or prominent positions are possibly at greater risk due to their greater visibility, lack of prominence does not remove the possibility of being at risk. This is true especially considering the fact that Haitian society is organized into small communities. Activities, either real or imputed, are a far more important consideration in assessing risk, than is prominence."</p> |
| III.        | <p>Americas Watch/National Coalition of Haitian Refugees, <u>Silencing a People: The Destruction of Civil Society in Haiti</u> (New York: Americas Watch, February 1, 1993).</p> <p>Based on eyewitness accounts and over 250 interviews conducted in the summer of 1992, this report documents numerous instances where relatives, friends, and neighbors of persons suspected of supporting and/or working with President Aristide and his organizations and movements are being targeted and persecuted.</p>   |
| IV.         | <p><u>Haiti: Resistance &amp; Democracy Bulletin #174</u>, reprinted by Haiti Communications Project, 14 January 1993, translated by the Haiti Communications Project, Boston, MA</p> <p>An elderly woman was imprisoned and severely beaten with an electric cord to extract information on the hiding place of her daughter.</p>  |

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<sup>1</sup> The term "Group At Risk" is used rather than "persecution" because the latter is a legal conclusion.

- V. Haiti: Resistance & Democracy- Bulletin #173, reprinted by Haiti Communications Project, 11 January 1993, translated by the Haiti Communications Project, Boston, MA
- In Jeremie, police arrested the entire family of an activist who has been hiding since the coup.
- VI. Amnesty International, HAITI: Human Rights Held Ransom (New York: Amnesty International, August 1992), "AMR 36/41/92."
- AI delegation that visited Haiti between March 20 and April 3, 1992, concludes that human rights abuses are part of daily life for most Haitians. Examples include the arrests of an activist's two sisters, the search of the home of an activist's wife, a mother killed one day after her son's arrest, and the killing of an activist's brother.
- VII. Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, "Haiti: A Human Rights Nightmare" (New York: Lawyers Committee for Human Rights, August 1992)
- Reports that when the soldiers could not find Jean Claude, they arrested his wife and three-month old child.
- VIII. Amnesty International, Urgent Action, Haiti, "Patrick Morisseau and Claire Edouard," 2 June 1992, "UA 182/92."
- Reports that security forces killed Claire Edouard, mother of the Lavalas supporter who they could not find.
- IX. National Coalition of Haitian Refugees, Haiti Insight, Vol. 3, No. 7 (March-April 1992).
- Describes incident in which soldiers, unable to locate peasant group leader, arrested and tortured his wife instead.
- X. Haiti: Resistance & Democracy Bulletin #44, reprinted by Amnesty International, 8 December 1991, translated by Mike Levy, AIUSA Haiti coordinator
- Reports from Port-au-Prince on the arrest of associates and relatives of Aristide officials. In the North, two young children were beaten by soldiers demanding to know the whereabouts of a former Aristide vice-delegate.
- XI. Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, Report of the Fact Finding Mission of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Haiti (9 January 1991).
- The Commission notes a 'wealth of information' indicating that there is a pattern of harassment of followers of President Aristide or their relatives. Describes how relatives often become targets of harassment when known Aristide supporters are in hiding.